

Knowledge of Folic Acid Benefits

Data are from the
Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), 1996-1999

For women of childbearing age, increasing folic acid use by taking multivitamins can reduce the risk of certain birth defects of the spinal cord, or brain development, called neural tube defects. It is important to start taking folic acid BEFORE pregnancy occurs. About 9 babies are born in Alaska every year with serious birth defects that might have been prevented by taking folic acid.

PRAMS surveys mothers of newborns across the state of Alaska. One question asks "Have you ever heard or read that taking the vitamin folic acid can help prevent some birth defects?" Following are results of this question from the most recent four years available.

- ❖ Knowledge about folic acid's benefits has increased from 63% in 1996 to 77% in 1999.

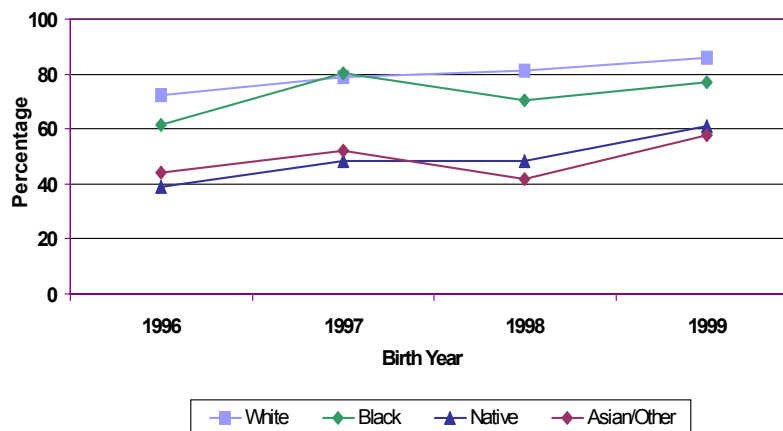
- ❖ White and black mothers show the highest percent knowledgeable at 80% and 72%, respectively, while Alaska Native and Asian mothers each show 50%.

- ❖ The older the mother is, the more likely she is to know about the benefits of folic acid.

- ❖ For Alaskan women who had babies during 1999, approximately 80% of those 20 years or older knew about the benefits of folic acid, whereas only 60% of teenage mothers knew.

- ❖ First-time mothers, regardless of their age, were more likely to know about the benefits of folic acid than women overall.

Knowledge of Folic Acid Benefits by Race, Alaska, 1996-99



Knowledge of Folic Acid Benefits by Maternal Age, First Time and Overall Mothers, Alaska, 1996-99

